

Parks and Recreation Section

Kanawha State Forest

The horse stables were extensively renovated with all stalls removed and new larger stalls constructed. A new 50' x 120' riding ring was constructed in front of the stables and the parking lot was renovated. Work continued on the new Middle Ridge trail with several miles of new trail added. Approximately 100 feet of the Davis Creek Trail was repaired with the assistance of local Boy Scout troops who installed gabion baskets in washed out areas. New campfire benches were installed in the Shrewsbury Hollow group camp area. The forest hosted the annual spring and fall wildflower hikes as well as an annual winter hike.

Kumbrabow State Forest

New cushion furniture, refrigerators and rocking chairs were added to several cabins. Four cabins had the floors sanded and refinished. The fireplaces in three cabins were torn out and replaced with new firebrick and elevated stone hearths. The deteriorated smoke chambers in several fireplaces were repaired and gas light controls were replaced. Charcoal grills were sanded and repainted at the picnic area and cabins. A shed was built to cover the gas pump and storage tank. Sections of the road were paved by the Division of Highways (DOH). A new trout fly fishing package was promoted and drew positive responses and new guests to the cabins. The forest received 200 inches of snowfall, or over 16 feet, this past winter.

Laurel Lake Wildlife Management Area

The Mingo County PSD installed three water meters on the area and in-house staff installed water lines from the meters to the area facilities. Staff completed the interior construction on the storage building behind the residence, installed fire rings at four picnic shelters and cleaned the swimming pool deck, bathhouse, picnic shelters and tennis courts with a pressure washer.

Little Beaver State Park

The campground was 70 percent complete with all sites, roads and parking areas in place. The bathhouses, water and sewer lines and paving were still under construction. The handicap access trail along the lake was under construction, but delayed by poor weather and construction of a sewer

line along the trail route. The residence front deck was replaced and the building was reroofed. The changing rooms and fence at the former swimming area were dismantled and the area opened for fishing. Parking lots were sealed and striped.

Lost River State Park

Work was completed on Phase I of the electrical project. All public restrooms were upgraded with new plumbing and fixtures. Cabin renovations included painting and the replacement of floor tile. The carpet at the pool was repaired and cleaned, a pump was replaced at the main well and the superintendent's residence exterior was stained.

Moncove Lake State Park

DOH added the campground loops to their maintenance inventory and paved them. The Monroe County Vo-Tech organization began construction on a new super-intendent's residence. The campground check-in station was renovated, including a new interior wall and self-registration system. Other park improvements included the installation of water pressure tanks in the campground bathhouses, repairs to sewage lift stations, replacement of the vending building overhead power line with an underground line and the addition of a John Deere utility vehicle to the park fleet. Hazardous trees were cut in the picnic area and campground, the horse-shoe pits were repaired and park signs were repainted. The park foundation held the annual Kid's Fishing Derby for approximately 350 participants.

North Bend Rail Trail

Work included improving drainage along a total of 13 miles of trail which encompassed ditching and culvert work. The trail received a finished surface of crushed limestone in some areas. Local communities along the trail continued to support the trail with enhancement projects such as the newly completed Town Square in Cairo.

North Bend State Park

Work continued on the infrastructure to support the various recreational facilities created as part of the North Fork of Hughes River Watershed Project. The boat launch ramps at the Cokely and Maples areas are complete. Handicap ac-

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cessible fishing facilities were completed at the Maples and Third Run sites. Renovations to the lodge and cabins began this year. These renovations include new lodge carpeting in the lobby, hallways and dining room and new appliances, cookware and kitchen cabinets for the cabins. Funding has also been set aside for installation of central heat and air conditioning for the cabins. A new cabin being built by the Pleasant, Ritchie and Tyler County Vo-Tech school is nearing completion. A new sewage lift station was installed in the River Run camping area.

Panther State Forest

Most of the work over the past fiscal year centered on recovery from the May 2002 flooding. Debris removal took several months; electrical repairs were done on breakers and outlets in the campground and picnic areas. Three flood damaged residences, including the superintendent's and assistant superintendent's, were demolished. Roadwork included clearing culverts, dozing and grading parking areas and repairing bridge abutments. Tons of riprap were used in the forest, signs were replaced, tons of debris were burned, the drain lines for the pool were replaced and the stream was cleared of fallen trees and other flood debris. The forest was hit again in February 2003 with flooding, but not as extensive as the May floods. Several footbridges were replaced after both flood events, trails were cleared of fallen trees and slips. Once flood repairs were done, staff managed to restrain all wooden structure exteriors, landscape the office, group camp and pool areas, renovate parts of the group camp bathhouse and install new entrance signs.

Pinnacle Rock State Park

The dry stack stone retaining wall around the parking area at the shelter was dismantled and rebuilt. The mortared rock wall along Route 52 was also redone. Repairs were made to the mortared rock steps to the shelter as well. The men's restroom was renovated with new sinks, paper towel dispensers and soap dispensers. Shelves were built in a storage room for cleaning supplies and hand tools. A metal security door was installed on one of the rooms at the shelter and walls and doors were reinforced to make it more difficult for anyone to break in. A wooden park map and bulletin board were installed at the shelter.

Pipestem Resort State Park

Renovations to six cottage bathrooms and kitchens completed the six-year cottage remodeling project. Six rooms at Mountain Creek Lodge were upgraded with new tub surrounds, fixtures and flooring. In-room coffee service was provided to all Mountain Creek and McKeever lodge rooms. Several lodge offices and conference rooms were equipped with high-speed Internet connections and all cables and hardware were installed for the upcoming computer reservation system. The conversion of electric equipment to gas continued with installation of a new gas grill in the Black Bear Snack Bar and installation of all gas piping for the upcoming McKeever Lodge boiler replacement. Several accessibility issues were addressed including converting two employee restrooms on the second floor of Mountain Creek to public restrooms, installation of two-way call stations at the top of the tram and McKeever Lodge and renovations to the fifth floor restrooms in McKeever. The second floor ceiling tiles were replaced in McKeever, structural supports were installed at the Recreation Center, the tram gear-box was rebuilt and the cable replaced as part of scheduled maintenance. All fire suppression systems in the five park kitchens were upgraded to meet Fire Marshal regulations. New equipment purchases included a greens mower, ditch mower and commercial washer for the park laundry. New roofs were installed at the maintenance building, one residence, the assistant superintendent's garage and Cottage 22. Several structures were also painted. The miniature golf course was fenced in preparation for upgrading and landscaping improvements.

Plum Orchard Wildlife Management Area

Staff constructed a boat dock at the Beech Bottom boat launch ramp and a new dock for the patrol boat and rental boats. All area signs were restrained or repainted. Both campground restrooms were painted inside. Four new rowboats were purchased and the older rental boats were refurbished and painted. The power line across the lake was replaced by AEP.

Prickett's Fort State Park

The amphitheater light control building was painted and the steps to the stage were repaired. The roof on the visitor's center was repaired and the inside of the center was painted. Rotting lumber on the boat dock was replaced and two of the fort cabins were rechinked.

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Seneca State Forest

Decorative arched railings were designed, constructed and installed by in-house staff on the spillway bridge at the lake. The access road to Cabin 1 was improved. Fold down barricade posts were installed on this road along with the entrance to the water plant. A boundary dispute with a local landowner was settled in favor of the forest and the proper boundary was restored. Two cabins were reshingled, one cabin had the ceiling replaced and varnished, and the Allegheny Hikers Shelter was renovated with new roofing and some log replacement.

Stonewall Jackson Lake State Park

The Stonewall Resort Lodge opened on October 2, 2002, with half the rooms available for rent at the time. The lodge opening came with much excitement and anticipation due to the popularity of the project in the region. Through the first year of operation, occupancy increased to over 50 percent. Contractors continued to work on the lodge through the winter to complete the remaining rooms for a February opening. Exterior landscaping was completed in May and much of the grass was grown in by June. Throughout the summer, the resort purchased equipment to add various recreational opportunities to the park, including paddle boats, kayaks, canoes, additional pontoon boats, bicycles and outdoor game equipment. The construction of a courtesy dock at the lodge was popular with guests. The resort received a Four Diamond Award rating from AAA in May. This rating is for 2004 publications, but use of the rating for current year publicity was approved by the AAA. It is rare that a new facility be awarded such a high rating. Two AmeriCorps teams worked at the park for six-week periods to construct approximately five miles of hiking and biking trails.

Tomlinson Run State Park

Work this year included installing a new playground at the miniature golf course, installing new fire rings in the campground and replacing a footbridge. At the group camp, three of the cabins were painted inside, light fixtures were replaced at the lower shelter and the transformer at Mineral Springs was replaced. At the pool, new partitions were installed in the bathhouse, all commodes were reset, a new ladder was installed in the pool and new lights were placed

on the outside poles. The pool concession stand also received new electrical service.

Tu-Endie-Wei State Park (Point Pleasant Battle Monument)

Completion of the landscaping improvements included leveling and trimming the hedge around the park to open views of the Ohio and Kanawha rivers, removing hazardous limbs from trees in public areas and inspecting remaining trees for future trimming. The flagstone walk along the Kanawha River side was repaired. Restroom partitions were received to upgrade the facility to ADA standards. The winter weather included a major ice storm in February 2003, along with high water afterward. Much work went into cleaning up after both events and not all debris along the riverbanks had been removed by the end of the fiscal year. The park continued to host events for the Point Pleasant Sternwheel Regatta and the annual Battle Days.

Twin Falls Resort State Park

The year was busy with normal maintenance and guest accommodation tasks. The park hosted the special conservation officer basic training for new superintendents, forest rangers and wildlife managers, which required the superintendent or assistant superintendent to be on duty daily as commandant. The building maintenance department continued the cottage renovation project with six more cottages completed and only one remaining. These renovations included all walls, flooring, kitchen cabinets, bathroom fixtures and outdoor decks. The lodge room renovations also continued and include painting the rooms and stripping the bathrooms to replace the ceilings, walls, floors, tub and other fixtures. Six lodge rooms were completed. The lodge roof replacement began with roughly one quarter of the roof complete. With the assistance of an AmeriCorps team, more than three miles of intermediate mountain biking trail was built.

Tygart Lake State Park

Asbestos roofing was removed from the superintendent's residence and the shop building. The linen building and Cabin 7 were rewired. New park signs were built and placed at their proper locations, including new park entrance signs with flowerbeds surrounding them. New signs

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were made and placed at the new playground. All the locks on the lodge rooms were replaced and the doors were adjusted for easier opening and closing. The parking areas at the park office and marina were upgraded for ADA compliance and striped. Lodge and cabin furniture was reupholstered. New fireplace screens and tools replaced the old ones in the cabins. Cabins were upgraded with bathroom improvements, including new lighting and fixtures, new baseboard heaters were installed in the four- and six-person cabins and kitchen upgrades included new counter tops, sinks and faucets. Other cabin improvements included new carpet in two cabins and new kitchen cookware and bedroom ceiling fans were installed in all cabins. The installation of electrical boxes and wiring was completed at the lodge for the new reservation system. New carpet was placed in the lodge rooms, hallways, and lobby. New side chairs were also placed in lodge guestrooms. Swings at the recreation hall and picnic area playgrounds were upgraded in order to meet criteria set by BRIM inspectors. New swings were ordered.

Valley Falls State Park

Major activity included construction of an eight foot wide concrete apron around both shelters to enhance the experience of shelter users, construction of a new snack machine shelter and a nearly 1,000 foot extension of the picnic area service road for the convenience of picnickers. One tragic and unfortunate occurrence was the accidental drowning of a young foreign student. Recovery of the body was extremely difficult due to the turbulence and power of the river and involved many days as well as assistance from a variety of state, regional and local rescue forces.

Watoga State Park (Includes Calvin Price State Forest)

Staff continued reroofing cabins as needed and the cabin interior renovation project also continued with the kitchen and bathrooms redone in Cabins 8 and 18 while Cabin 33 had only the kitchen redone. These renovations included replacing the flooring and joists as needed, new floor covering, kitchen counters, showers, sinks, faucets and water heaters. In the maintenance area, the CCC barracks buildings were reroofed and windows were repaired. The Beaver Creek campground bathhouse was extensively renovated and made ADA accessible. Partitions were removed; plumbing was rerouted; new partitions, water heaters, space heaters and

sinks were installed, and the building was reroofed and painted inside and out. Repairs continued on the rock walls along Island Lick Road and the removal of ground grills in the picnic area and their replacement with standing grills. On Calvin Price State Forest, a 259-acre timber sale was completed and cutting commenced in May 2003.

Watters Smith Memorial State Park

Staff worked to rewire display cases and wall outlets and lights in the Gift Shop/Museum and installed new curtains in the Old House Museum. A pole shed was constructed at the residence to store equipment. The park received a donation of fertilizer from a local Wal-Mart that was used on the turf areas and fields. A new gas stove was installed in the swimming pool filter building, a major water leak was repaired on the line under the pool parking lot. Trees were cut and stumps removed from around the Old House Museum. Repairs began on the stables barn, including removing the old stalls.

Planning/Engineering/Maintenance Section

Following is the status of Planning, Engineering and Maintenance projects from July 1, 2002, to June 30, 2003.

1. The following construction projects were completed between July 1, 2002, and June 30, 2003.

- Babcock - Dam Monitoring Well Repairs
- Blackwater Falls - Lindy Point Overlook Improvements
- Cabwaylingo - Vo-Tech Cabin
- Cacapon - Water Well #4
- Canaan Valley - Sleeping Units Repairs
- Cass - Whittaker Water Improvements
- Chief Logan - Playground Equipment
- Greenbrier River Trail - Paving
- Hawks Nest - Golf Course Irrigation System
- Hawks Nest - Golf Cart Paths (Phase 1)
- Lost River - Cabin Furniture
- North Bend - Lift Station Replacement
- Pipestem - Tram Wire Rope Replacement
- Stonewall Jackson Lake - Lodge, Conference Center and Golf Course

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2. The following projects were under construction as of June 30, 2003.

- Beech Fork - Picnic Area Restroom
- Berkeley Springs - Spring House Renovation
- Blennerhassett - Transformer Tower Replacement
- Cacapon - Water Line Replacement
- Canaan Valley - Water Well Connection
- Canaan Valley - Fire Alarm Improvements
- Cathedral - Water Well Treatment
- Kanawha - Vo-Tech Residence
- Lost River - Electrical Improvements
- Moncove Lake - Vo-Tech Residence
- North Bend - Vo-Tech Residence
- Panther - Sewage Treatment Plant Flood Damage Repairs
- Pipestem - Tram Gear Box Repairs

3. Bids were being solicited, but purchase orders or notice to proceed not yet issued as of June 30, 2003.

- Cabwaylingo - Group Camp
- Cacapon - Swimming Area Sewer Improvements
- Cacapon - Lodge Electric Improvements
- Cass - Depot Roof Replacement
- Cedar Creek - Campground
- Chief Logan - Conference Center Gazebo
- Greenbrier River Trail - Slab Town Trail Head
- Pipestem - Lodge Cooling Tower Replacement
- Prickett's Fort - Electric Service Improvements
- Watoga - Riverside Lift Station Repairs
- Watoga - Riverside Water Tank Painting

4. Plans and specifications were being prepared for the following projects as of June 30, 2003.

- Audra - Swimming Area Bathhouse Renovation
- Audra - Picnic Shelter
- Babcock - Reservoir Replacement
- Beech Fork - Sewage Treatment Plant
- Berkeley Springs - Pool Gutter Replacement
- Berwind Lake - Pool Repairs
- Blennerhassett - Boat Dock Repairs
- Bluestone - Pool Replacement

- Camp Creek - Reservoir Replacement
- Canaan Valley - Cabin/Ski Area Sewage Treatment Improvements
- Canaan Valley - Lodge Sewer Line Replacement
- Carnifex Ferry - Restroom
- Cass - Clubhouse Renovation
- Cass - Water Tank Replacement
- Cass - Whittaker Water Improvements
- Chief Logan - Lodge
- Hawks Nest - Boat Dock Improvements
- Hawks Nest - Golf Cart Paths (Phase 2)
- Holly River - Electric Improvements
- Holly River - Activities Building Addition
- Lost River - Cabin Area Sewer Extension
- Moncove Lake - Dam Improvements
- North Bend - Cokely Campground
- Pipestem - Miniature Golf Course Improvements
- Pipestem - Lodge Park Expansion
- Point Pleasant - Monument Restoration
- Tomlinson Run - Master Plan
- Tomlinson Run - Campground Lift Station Repairs
- Tygart Lake - Lake Erosion Protection
- Tygart Lake - Lodge Concrete Improvements

Community Work Experience Program (CWEP)

In calendar year 2002 this program provided the following benefits:

- 20 participants for 9 state recreation areas.
- 9,926 hours of maintenance, crafts and general service work.
- \$51,120.19 of federal funds.

Programming, Promotions and Public Information Section

The state park programming staff consists of an administrator who serves as a resource for park personnel in the area of event planning, advertising, marketing and interpretation as well as scheduling and coordinating printing and distribution of park brochures; a part-time marketing specialist who handles media contacts, press releases, public information and assists with advertising placement; a full-

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time park activities coordinator who administers statewide programs such as the Very Important Parks Person (VIPP) program and the Hiking West Virginia Program, works with school groups and civic groups, organizes special events and manages the seasonal nature/recreation program. A full-time graphic designer develops and designs all brochures, public information and advertising. The staff photographer maintains and updates photo files. The webmaster maintains and develops the park Web site at www.wvstateparks.com.

Through the nature and recreation programs held at state parks and forests, guests and visitors are stimulated to develop an appreciation and awareness of the natural environment. This understanding of natural resources and their importance in our daily lives leads to a commitment to the management and conservation of those resources. Education through these weekly programs is a key element in the motivation to protect and support West Virginia's natural areas. Nature and recreation programs also provide opportunities for recreational activities and entertainment in state park or forest settings. These dynamic programs are evaluated and adjusted so that they may always meet the goals of the nature and recreation program. By hosting special events and entertainers, the mission to satisfy guests and to promote a positive image is fulfilled. There were more than 200 special events held in fiscal year 2003. Summer attendance figures indicate that 102,334 visitors enjoyed the seasonal programs. Total attendance to programs for the year was approximately 200,000 visitors.

Volunteers play an important role in West Virginia State Parks. They may act as campground hosts, golf course starters, hike leaders, work at a museum or be a member of a park foundation. During 2002, volunteers recorded 37,527.50 hours in West Virginia states parks with Blennerhassett leading with 18,071 volunteer hours.

The Programming Section also provides information on special events, discounts, and park news to various media throughout the state. It responds to media requests for information and offers materials, photos, and story ideas. Many contacts have been established and several article opportunities have been identified.

Facts on news and events are also available on the state parks and West Virginia Division of Tourism Web sites. This provides easily accessible data to a wide audience. Materials are updated frequently to ensure that the public and news media receive current information.

A quarterly newsletter published for the employees of West Virginia State Parks provides information and updates on numerous park related topics. It is distributed to all park personnel and retirees and aids in familiarizing readers with applicable issues.

The state park advertising plan for 2002-03 by Charles Ryan and Associates co-ops with the Division of Tourism plan. Advertising is financed by video lottery and lottery funds. These dollars are used to print brochures, individual and general park advertising, travel show participation, and promotional items. While ads are placed year-round, the ad plan focuses on the off-season of September through April. The 2002-03 plan included a popular monthly statewide newspaper insert run in cooperation with the Division of Tourism that featured special discount packages.

The graphics design office produces all promotional items and artwork for the entire system including brochures, advertisements, flyers, programs, posters, and Web art. The primary objective of this office is to design and maintain a pleasing and consistent public image for the park system. During last fiscal year, the graphics design office produced in excess of 179 publications and 257 advertisements for the system.

A major project undertaken by the photography office this year was the updating of audiovisual productions at Cass Scenic Railroad State Park and Blennerhassett Island Historical State Park. The slide presentation at the Cass Showcase was in a serious state of deterioration. The script was revised and the damaged slides were cleaned and scanned. These slides were edited together with vintage video clips, current video clips, and current slides into a much improved DVD production. As a part of the face-lift, new equipment was purchased and installed, including a LCD projector, a DVD player, new speakers, and a 12-foot beaded projection

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screen. The video that was being shown at the Blennerhassett Museum was produced before the mansion had been completed and was in serious need of being updated. New segments of video footage were edited into the existing video to update it into a much-improved production. New equipment was also purchased and installed, including a LCD project, speakers, and a DVD player.

The official Web site address was changed to www.wvstateparks.com with a new overall appearance and organization of information. The home page is primarily used to display current and upcoming special events, packages and discounts, and new projects or information. Other sections that have been updated and managed closely this year are the conference planning section and packages.

Two new Web site visitor increase tools were incorporated into our site. The first is a monthly e-mail newsletter. Each month seven to 10 areas of interest or special announcements are compiled to include in the newsletter and provide brief paragraphs with links referencing more information available at specific locations throughout our network of web sites. To date 2,109 people have subscribed since the newsletter began in February 2003. Newsletter activity reports indicate that each month 40 percent or more of recipients open their newsletters. For example, the August newsletter

it was sent to 1,765 recipients and 1,287 have opened the newsletters. The most popular areas of the newsletter always relate to a package or discount announcement.

The second visitor increase feature (which also created "stickiness" to the Web site) was the creation of a monthly giveaway contest, which is associated with the visitor completing a survey questionnaire. For most of the year, questions were targeted to help track attendance from travel shows in correlation to Web site visitation. Every two months, two nights lodging were given away at select state parks, Cacapon, Twin Falls and Tygart Lake.

In addition to the above, various items surrounding a stable Web presence were managed and/or updated in 2003. Those items include but are not limited to:

- Search engine recognition of new official web site address as well as phasing out the old web address as a top search engine result.
- Official Web site design of wildlife management areas and rail trails.
- Add new park trail maps for download.
- Reorganization of lodge park Web sites.
- Rate changes and policy clarifications.
- Monitor and analyze Web site traffic through hit reports.